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Chinese reggae

Long Shen Dao hopes to find fans all over the world with its Asian take on Caribbean music.



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Fashion designer's 10-year struggle

Caroline Deleens left behind Paris 10 years ago to carve out a niche in Beijing, but success remains elusive in spite of the city's reduced competition.

The hutong live on

With many hutong already lost, the city has found broad support for efforts to protect what remains of this quintessentially Beijing heritage. But the heart of the hutong is not its architecture: it's the community.

The Dashilan-Liulichang area is testing a new preservation model that attempts to save the aging alleys by keeping their homes in the hands of active residents.

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Web shops drive retail stores' death

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Finding the right phone service

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Exhibition adds context to films

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City begins construction on new tallest building

By Han Manman

Beijing's next tallest building will be 500 meters tall and shaped like a vase. The state-owned building, being called the China Goblet or China Zun Tower, will begin construction on Monday.

The 118-story building, named after a traditional wine vessel, is expected to be completed within five years.

According to the investment giant CITIC Group, the building, located in the CBD area, will be used to provide office space and as a tourist attraction. It will have a viewing area for sightseeing and a cafe with a panoramic view.

Aiming to top China's more environmentally-friendly skyscrapers, the group said the building will have the texture of woven bamboo, and the top of the building will resemble a flying lantern.

It will be located several meters from the 330-meter tall Tower 3 of the China World

Trade Center, currently the city's tallest building.

The building will dwarf most of the world's current skyscrapers when complete, save the 828-meter Burj Khalifa in Dubai and the 601-meter Abraj Al-Bait Towers in Saudi Arabia, but will soon be outdone by other Chinese high-rises.

The Shanghai Tower, designed to reach an eventual height of 632 meters in Pudong's Lujiazui area, will be ready for use in January 2015. Shanghai-based Greenland Group is planning to build a 606-meters building, the world's third-tallest, in Wuhan, Hubei Province, within five years.

More than 200 buildings taller than 150 meters are under construction across the country, Xinhua reported.

Even some less populated Chinese cities and villages are planning to build skyscrapers.

Fangchenggang City in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region has fewer than 1 mil-

lion residents, yet it plans to build a 528-meter Asian International Financial Center, taller than the Shanghai World Financial Center.

Huaxi Village, Jiangsu Province, formerly the nation's richest village, is building a 328-meter hotel and that will open next month.

"China is obsessed with skyscrapers, even small counties want to build them," said professor Yuan Qifeng of Guangzhou's Sun Yat-sen University. "Politicians and businessmen see them as status symbols."

But Yuan said there are many problems behind skyscraper construction, including real safety concerns. China's best-equipped firefighting teams cannot fight blazes that occur at a height of more than 100 meters.

"A city should be appreciated for its comprehensive power and culture, not just the height of its buildings," he said.



Beijing will begin building the city's new tallest skyscraper in the central business district. Xinhua Photo

World photographers focus on Beijing

By Chu Meng

Ten of the world's most recognized photographers gathered at the Yongdingmen, the southern most gate on the city's historic axis, to begin the 12th World Photographers Focusing on Beijing last Friday.

Ten participating photographers came from the US, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Hungary and Switzerland at the invitation of the Beijing Municipal Government, the Beijing Information Office and the Beijing Foreign Cultural Exchange Association.

The photography event is organized by the Beijing Foreign Cultural Exchange Center.

During a two-week journey to rediscover the city, the participating photographers will focus on both historic and modern buildings located along the city's central access to juxtapose the archaic layout with its rapid development.

"We are inviting the world's photographers to capture the charm of the ancient gates, city walls, hutong and courtyards, as well as the prosperous commercial streets and skyscrapers, for sharing with people around the world," Wang Hui, director of the Beijing Information Office, said at the opening speech.

World Photographers Focusing on Beijing was first held in the fall of 1999. The yearly event has become a window for people from around the world to get a dynamic sense of Beijing.

"Foreign photographers see Bei-



Joe McNally, an American photographer, is excited about rediscovering Beijing. Photo provided by Han Bing

jing from a different perspective than ours. They see what we do not," Wang said.

"I believe great photos leave something unsaid for people who see them and feel them," said Trey Ratcliff, a photographer from the US. "They help them to recall their own stories and memories. And that's what I should strive for here."

Also attending are American photographers Joe McNally and Brad Stein and German photog-

raphers Jorg Hein and Frank Palmer, who participated in photographing the new CCTV building in 2008.

Also in attendance are former winners of the World Press Photo, Best of Photojournalism Competition and the White House-sponsored News Photographers' Eyes of History Competition.

A photo exhibition of works created during the event will open on Wangfujing Street in October.

Gov enters waste oil business to regulate trade

By Zhang Dongya

The Beijing Municipal Bureau of Agriculture said the city is constructing factories to process used cooking oil in 16 districts and counties, *The Economic Observer Online* reported Wednesday.

The factories will purchase oils that have been used for frying food, waste fats left over from slaughterhouses and dirty oil collected from kitchen waste.

The new program calls for monthly quality inspections at slaughterhouses that are selling discarded fat from pigs, cattle and sheep. Inspections would begin next month under the supervision of the Beijing Municipal Commission of Commerce. All results will be reported to the municipal government.

The program is expected to rein in a growing trade in used cooking oils.

The Beijing catering industry uses some 600,000 tons of oil each year; an additional 90,000 tons of waste oil comes from kitchen waste.

Much of the discarded oil is currently sold to illegal processing factories, which recycle it for use in restaurants. Local media groups have published numerous investigative reports about the dubious trade.

Tod Li, a journalist in Hunan Province, reported that the city of Changsha alone had more than 20 factories and workshops that were buying, processing and reselling waste oil illegally.

The government hopes that get-

ting into the business and cutting off the factories' source of waste oil can bring the industry under control.

Li Xiang, a journalist for Luoyang TV in Henan Province, was reportedly killed while investigating some of the illegal companies distributing processed waste oil to the market. His final microblog post on Weibo said, "Some netizens said that Luanchuan County [in Henan Province] has factories that are processing dirty oil, but the local food safety commission denied finding any such locations."

Police said the journalist's death had nothing to do with the investigation, but many remain skeptical.

Earlier this month, the large catering group South Beauty Restaurant was reported to be using waste oil to fry food for its employees at its Nanjing branch. It has since pledged not to use waste oil to fry products that are intended for sale.

Media groups across the country have reported the existence of large-scale waste oil recyclers in every province of the country. However, high cost and chaotic competition in the illegal trade is causing many smaller oil processors to leave the business.

"Perhaps we could learn from foreign countries, many of which require restaurants to sell their used cooking oil to appointed collectors as part of their application for a restaurant license," said Hui Bodi, a food expert.

Jinhua shuts dog meat festival under pressure

By Zhao Hongyi

After 600 years of celebration, the wealthy city of Jinhua, Zhejiang Province canceled its October dog meat festival, local media reported.

The festival has its origins in the later years of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) and early years of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). It began in the town of Ganxi, now the city's Maocheng District. Each celebration is marked by the slaughter of hundreds of dogs.

Dogs are prepared in various dishes, barbecued, boiled or dried into jerky. At the start of each October, organizers collect dogs from nearby villages and areas in the quantity requested by clients.

However, in recent years the festival has fallen into ill repute for failing to provide evidence that its dogs were raised on farms rather than trapped.

On Tianya, a popular online forum, one member posting under the handle "slight pains" lamented the yearly festival.

That discussion thread proved so popular that Qi Hao, vice chairman of the environmental NGO Green Zhejiang, called on local media to assist in ending the festival.

"Dogs are man's best friend. Why should we slaughter them



The city of Jinhua posted signs to inform people about the dog slaughter.

CFP Photos

so indiscriminately each year?" Qi said.

Chen Manhong, an employee at the Zhejiang Pets Protection Association, called on the local government to discontinue the festival.

Chen Yuan, a board member of the Hangzhou Pet and Animal Rescue Association, said that like pork, dog meat should go through inspection and certification before being sold on the market.

"Even farmed dogs should be vaccinated in accordance with the nation's laws and



The dog meat festival has a 600-year history in Jinhua.

regulations," Chen Yuan said. "And dogs that have been vaccinated are no longer suitable for human consumption."

She demanded that the local government provide documented origin of all meat if it proceeds with the festival this year.

Li Ying, a spokesman for Maocheng District, defended the festival as a local tradition.

"Most of the dogs are from dog farms in Jiangxi Province," Li said. He said a few may have been trapped in nearby communities.

The district government chose to close the festival after researching its origins and learning it began as a trade fair for agricultural commodities.

"The modern logistics industry supplants the need for such fairs," Li Ying said. "That was the impression we were given by local residents."

Animals and pets lovers remain far from satisfied, and are calling on the government to step up its control of the city's meat trade to prevent private trade in dog-meat.

More extreme groups are calling for the release of all farmed dogs and punishments for those who have ever had a part in dog trapping, dog farming and dog slaughter trades.

Suicide prevention counselor helps people find hope

When Feng Daming wakes up in the morning, his first task is filing away the information he has collected during the previous day's work. However, before he can finish entering the data, a message appears on his computer:

"Help. There is no way out but for me to die."

Feng has been running his own suicide prevention hotline since 2004, taking phone calls and responding to online messages 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

More than 1,000 Beijingers have turned to Feng for help so far.

Most of his callers are AIDS patients, drug abusers and homosexuals. These callers feel marginalized and hopeless, and believe that death is the only way for them to escape their woes.

Fortunately, Feng is around to help.

Suicide prevention not a one-man mission

"The callers place high hopes on me, but it really takes more than one person to make a difference," Feng said.

Although official statistics

have shown a drastic decline in China's suicide rate in recent years, the phenomenon remains a major public health concern in China.

Michael Phillips, a suicide prevention researcher at the Shanghai Mental Health Center, said that an estimated 200,000 people commit suicide in China every year, accounting for more than 30 percent of the world's total annual suicides. In addition, an estimated 2.8 million Chinese attempt suicide each year, but only 9 percent of the total attempts to seek professional help, Phillips said.

"Many people do not recognize their mental problems," he said. "In rural areas, more than 60 percent of local residents have never even heard that depression is a mental illness."

For those who are aware of their mental issues, many are too ashamed to seek professional help, fearing discrimination in their workplaces, Phillips said. Others simply don't believe that mental illnesses can be effectively treated, or feel that therapy is too expensive.

Recidivism is also a problem, as many of those who attempt suicide once are likely to try it again later.

"It is wrong to think that people who are prevented from attempting suicide won't try to kill themselves again later," said Li Xianyun, associate director of the Beijing Suicide Research and Prevention Center (BSRPC).

"Their families and friends should be alert for signs of suicidal behavior," Li said.

A lack of suicide prevention services is another problem. Limited funds and a lack of qualified employees means that only 24 percent of the calls placed to the BSRPC's hotline between 2002 and 2011 were answered, according to an internal survey.

The *Lancet*, a prestigious international medical journal, published a column on August 22 stating that China has 14,000 psychiatrists and psychologists, a number that is far too few to treat its massive population.

In addition, most of the people who volunteer to work at suicide prevention hotlines are university students, high school counselors and factory workers who receive only brief training before working the phones, according to Chen Yuanling, a psychiatrist from the Wenzhou Kangning Hospital.

Life or death decisions

"Many volunteers like me have had psychological problems or even demonstrated suicidal behavior before," Feng said. "It's our personal pain that has inspired us to save the lives of others."

Feng admitted that there was once a point in his life when he considered killing himself.

"During those days, I was fascinated with railway tracks and was always talking about becoming a train conductor," Feng said. "No one knew that there was an inner voice telling me to plan a 'dramatic death' by lying on the tracks."

Feng was in a tense relationship with his ex-wife at the time. He said she once attempted to stab him with a kitchen knife during an argument.

"I was guided by Buddhist teachings and finally made peace with my ex-wife. However, many others have not been as lucky as I was," Feng said.

Feng once received a call from a woman who called herself Xiao Fang, an unemployed AIDS patient who wished to end her own life by jumping off of a building. She told him that

she sat in her apartment all day long, staring at photos that she took before she found out that she was infected.

"I urged her to tear the photos off of her wall so that she could stop indulging in her old memories, but she never did," Feng said.

When Xiao Fang suddenly stopped contacting him, Feng called her attending physicians and warned them of her suicidal ambitions. However, she jumped off a building before her doctors could intervene.

Feng lived in remorse for more than a year. "I felt responsible for her death. She could have been saved if I had just stayed with her until the end, instead of calling the hospital," Feng said.

Feng has made greater efforts since then to ensure that no more of his callers end their lives. He said that he once stood outside the apartment of a divorcee all night long to make sure that she didn't hurt herself, and kept a 13-year-old boy company after he was despondent over a breakup with his girlfriend, even though the child cursed him for his efforts.

"I know that I'm doing the right thing every time I help save a life."

(Xinhua)

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Free lunch for Europe?

Controversy over reports of China bailing out Italy

After Standard & Poor's (S&P) downgrade of the US' credit rating, the big question among Asia watchers was: will China save the world (economy) once again? And indeed, the government has given a hand to smaller economies such as Portugal, Spain and Greece.

But when Italy, the world's eighth largest economy, became the first major European nation to turn to China for help, it raised red flags everywhere.



Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi

Antonello Nusca/CFP

With the second-largest debt in Europe, only behind Greece, the Italian government turned to China as a possible source of cash to alleviate its budget deficit, the *Financial Times* reported.

Italy hoped that China would help with its \$340 billion (2.18 trillion yuan) sovereign wealth fund to buy Italian government bonds, Italian officials told the London-based newspaper.

Though little else is known, Lou Jiwei, chairman of China Investment Corp, one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds, reportedly led a delegation to Rome last week.

Lou met with Italian finance minister Giulio Tremonti and Cassa di Risparmio di Roma, a state-controlled entity

that has established an Italian Strategic Fund open to foreign investors.

In a like manner, Italy sent high-ranking officials to Beijing last month to meet Chinese financial authorities. Further negotiations were expected to take place soon.

The *Financial Times* cites Italian officials as saying that China would probably buy about 4 percent of Italy's \$2.4 trillion debt.

Stock markets rebounded last week after the Italy-China talks.

European analysts were cautious about the bailout. Although China has stepped in to offer loans to countries such as Portugal, Spain and Greece, analysts say the purchases of peripheral European debt have been relatively small.

China, however, voiced its confidence in the European economy on Tuesday after S&P cut Italy's sovereign credit rating.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei said at a news conference that China will continue to view Europe as an important investment market.

The Eurozone is undergoing a financial crisis. Several members with over-reaching national debts have turned to their richer neighbors for bailouts.

Although the eurozone has demanded austerity measures and poured cash into the crippled European economies, the risk of default and a worsening financial crisis is still looming over the continent. (Agencies)

Brief

Chicken tariffs on US legal

(AP) – China said Wednesday that tariffs it imposed on imports of US chicken last year are legal, after the US filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization saying Beijing violated international trade rules.

The Ministry of Commerce said on its website that China "believes the anti-dumping and countervailing measures it has taken on chicken products originating in the US are in accordance with the law and conform to WTO rules."

The case is one of several that US trade officials have filed against China this year at the WTO. The United States also has filed complaints about Chinese tariffs on steel products and its subsidies for wind power equipment.

The ministry said China would study Washington's request for talks on the issue and would handle the issue according to WTO dispute settlement procedures.

China imposed the poultry tariffs in September 2010. It said US chicken producers benefited from subsidies and were exporting their goods to China at unfairly low prices.

Countries are allowed to impose punitive tariffs to offset both practices, but US officials said China did not follow proper procedures when it imposed them.

NBA forward Martin

bolts for China

(AP) – Kenyon Martin becomes the third Denver Nuggets free agent to sign a contract to play basketball in China this season.

Martin's agent, Andy Miller, told The Associated Press on Wednesday that the 33-year-old forward has agreed to a deal with the Xinjiang Flying Tigers of the Chinese Basketball Association.

By doing so, Martin won't be able to return to play in the NBA if there is a 2011-12 season. Owners have locked out the players in a labor dispute and the league says players won't be able to opt out of their deals to return to the NBA.

Denver starters Ty Lawson and Danilo Gallinari are playing in Europe, but can return if there indeed is a 2011-12 season, Martin will not until the Chinese season ends in March.

J.R. Smith and Wilson Chandler have also elected to play in China, which won't allow NBA players to opt out of their one-year contracts should the lockout end.

Martin's agent, Andy Miller, confirmed to The Associated Press the forward has agreed to a deal with the Flying Tigers. He will join shooting guard Quincy Douby, a former first-round draft pick by the Sacramento Kings.

Hero pig of earthquake cloned

(AFP) – A heroic pig who survived more than a month buried under rubble after the 2008 earthquake in China's Sichuan province has been successfully cloned, according to a report.

Scientists in the southern city of Shenzhen performed the experiment on Zhu Jianqiang, or "Strong-Willed Pig," and produced six offspring with DNA identical to their dad, who was hailed as a national hero following his harrowing ordeal, the *Sunday Morning Post* reported.

The births over the past few weeks of six piglets happened even though Zhu had been castrated before the quake, suffered severe trauma from being buried for 36 days and is five years old – or about 60 in human terms.

"But the wonderful pig surprised us again," Du Yutao, the leader of the cloning project, told the *Post*.

The 150-kilogram hog reportedly survived in the ruins of its sty by chewing charcoal and drinking rainwater.

His offspring reportedly bear a striking resemblance to their dad, including a birthmark between their eyes, the *Post* reported.

The piglets will likely be paired off and sent to a museum and a genetic institute, it said.

An 8.0-magnitude quake rocked China's Sichuan and parts of neighboring Shaanxi and Gansu provinces on May 12, 2008, killing tens of thousands and flattening swathes of the province.

The third eye

Can China save Italy? And if it can, should it?

By Huang Daohen

With \$3.2 trillion (20.5 trillion yuan) in foreign currency reserves in the bank, many experts say China should use the cash to bail out its sick neighbors, and in the process, to play a key role in the global market.

But Zhao Xiao, local economics professor, sees it somewhat differently.

"China may eventually purchase some of Italy's bonds, but it is wrong to expect the so-called bailout to solve the problem once and for all," Zhao said. He believes what China can do now for European countries is to provide liquidity in a market that is undergoing a severe crisis of confidence.

"That can help Italy buy some time while it finds a longer-term solution," he said.

Zhao said in this term, China can no

more "save" Italy than Europe can.

But when China finally pulls the trigger to help Europe, Zhao said the country should be cautious and invest money in safe and liquid instruments.

The Chinese government clearly shares Zhao's concerns. On his latest trips to Europe, Premier Wen Jiabao said China would step in and buy Greek, Spanish and Portuguese bonds, but there are few confirmed details about the actual transaction.

Ordinary people in the country are, however, more practical. While they feel sorry for the conditions in Europe, many said it seems paradoxical for a country where there are still hundreds of millions of people living in poverty to rescue its much richer neighbors.

A recent poll by *Beijing Today* echoed that sentiment. Nine out of 10 respondents – ordinary people and business professors in Beijing – think the country should not try to save the world, but focus on its own problems.

Hu Xin, senior researcher at Accenture in Beijing, said he is concerned about the country's current fight with rampant inflation.

China has its own problems to deal with, Hu said. "Rising wages, food supply pressure and falling emerging exports could crush an economy trying to transition."

"If you have been to the remote villages in western China, you would know that there are still people who can barely feed themselves, to say nothing of getting better education and decent medical care," he said.

Retailers fail

Rising rent, empty stores spell lights out for Pacific

By Huang Daohen

When US retail giants Home Depot and Best Buy left China earlier this year, analysts blamed it on a failure to cater to local habits.

But even stores that are embracing consumers' passions are not excelling in sales.

With the rise of e-business, China's retail industry appears to be at a crossroads. The many department stores may provide business lessons for their peers determined to weather the storm.



The Pacific Place department store at Sanlitun

Bo Wen/IC Photo

A change in routine

Erin Chou has been a bit distracted lately.

Not because of the long line she has to wait in to exchange her loyalty card points for products, but because she has to find a way to travel halfway across the city to buy imported goods.

Like many foreigners living in the Sanlitun area, Chou's life went through a shakeup when she learned that Pacific Century Place would close its two stores in Beijing on October 25 – including Chou's favorite: the Pacific Century Place Store in Sanlitun.

Chou, a 35-year-old Chinese American, works for a foreign-funded securities agency. In 2008, she and her husband left their New York home to live in their current apartment, inherited from another colleague.

"I was told life was convenient for an expat in Sanlitun, as it is the highest concentration of foreign residents in the capital," Chou said.

It was: the area had more bars and foreign restaurants than anywhere else.

Among them was Pacific Century Place, a gleaming modern landmark and a key stop on Chou's daily routine. The Japanese-style supermarket in the basement offered foreign cuts of meat and imported groceries.

Upstairs, brands like Calvin Klein catered to both foreign and domestic tastes. It also hosted branches of Starbucks, Dairy Queen and a Taiwanese hotpot chain.

Pacific stores closed

But now, Pacific will close after a decade of successful business.

While inconvenient, Chou shrugged and said it was part of life in Beijing.

The Pacific store at Sanlitun was open as usual on Tuesday afternoon. Only a few customers

were shopping. A cleaner in the mall said traffic was similarly low even on weekends.

At the VIP center at the first floor, customers waited to exchange their loyalty points. "I heard the news about the closure in the newspaper. The company never told us," a customer surnamed Ma said.

Staff at the information counter said they had not been informed of the closure. The Wukesong branch, another store to be closed, also denied having received any information.

Many shoppers at the Sanlitun store on Tuesday said they were surprised by the news. "We actually like the store, though the goods are a little more expensive here. There's no reason to close it," said a customer surnamed Chen.

The Taiwan-based Far Eastern Group, the parent company of Pacific Century Place, said the closure is certain.

"Our decision has nothing to do with the store's performance. The rent increases at Pacific Century Place are simply more than we can afford," Tao Yucong, general manager of Pacific Century Place, told the *Beijing Youth Daily*.

Pacific Century Place was an attractive location 10 years ago. Today, its rent has escalated to 28 yuan per month per square meter, Tao said.

Tao said the closure may be temporary, and that the store hopes to find a new location in the capital.

Winter for retailers?

However, market analysts said the closure was caused by the same problems that plague retailers across the nation.

"Escalating rent, a lack of enough shoppers and increasing pressure from online retailers will make things tough for businesses in the traditional retail industry,"

said Yao Ying, a research director at Qingxue, a local marketing agency.

Yao said the online business boom poses a great threat to traditional department stores. "They can afford to offer lower prices since they do not have to maintain a physical outlet," she said.

Online stores also allow those who hate traffic jams and crowded stores to buy at home. Yao said that's why the Beijing-based online retailer Jingdong Mall made the cover of global newspapers.

Founded in 2004, Jingdong follows a business model similar to Amazon.com and sells everything from consumer electronics to cosmetics. It is expected to make an IPO offer in the US later this year.

The company hopes to raise between \$4 billion and \$5 billion – a record take for an Chinese Internet company.

Jingdong said at its site 360buy.com that it has more than 25 million registered users, and is expected to take in 28 billion yuan this year, up from 10 billion yuan in 2010.

Its success has crushed the profit margins of traditional department stores. Yao said its success should be a warning sign for the industry, which is still building new shopping malls in big cities.

Of course, malls and department stores won't vanish – there will always be places for people who want to shop outside, Yao said.

He said stores will slowly transform into trendier shopping complexes intended for youth entertainment.

Many frequent customers of the Pacific store of Sanlitun have moved their shopping to a new mall several blocks away – one that has more fashion shows and flagship stores.

"Pacific used to be very busy, but now all the young customers go to Sanlitun Village," Yao said.

Market watch

Understanding the market

In spite of the tough times, Yao said the country's retail market is growing and continues to offer huge potential. However, overseas investors may have easier access to some sectors.

But successful investors should be aware that the country's retail market structure is vastly different from that found in countries like the US, he said.

Purchasing power and retail demand vary greatly across the country due to the income gap. Therefore, the Chinese market is highly fragmented and there are many small- and medium-sized retailers, unlike in the US, where big-box stores are dominant.

Yao said foreign companies may find lucrative opportunities and sub-markets, such as e-commerce.

In 2009, the country's 108 million online shoppers spent 250 billion yuan. As online payment becomes easier and more secure, more people are choosing to shop online.

Yao said drug retailing can be another opportunity for foreign investors. The government allowed foreign capital access to the country's retail drug market in 2004, though it still caps foreign investment at 49 percent in joint ventures. Few foreign drug stores have taken advantage of the opportunity.

"However, you can see the potential here. There are 1.3 billion people, and annual retail drug sales total 500 billion yuan," Yao said.

Foreign firms find need for social responsibility

By Huang Daohen

Foreign businesses in China are focusing more on supporting sustainable, green economy as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies – policies increasingly important to success in the market.

The trend is evidenced by Marriott's recent project in Sichuan Province. The US-based hotel chain announced last week that it will expand its freshwater conservation program, Nobility of Nature, to help people in Yingjing County, Sichuan Province develop a sustainable economic model.

Marriott said the program, which began with \$500,000 (3.2 million yuan) in seed money, will provide training, resources and community development for local villages throughout the province.

In its first project in Sichuan Province last year, the company helped Guanba Village in Pinggu County kickstart a bee farming business and provided the local farmers with marketing support.

"They had good and fresh honey, but just didn't know how to sell it," said Bob Fabiano, managing director of JW Marriott Beijing and head of the program.

The benefits can be mutual. While helping Guanba Village conserve fresh water and foster bee farms, the company acquired some 2,200 kilograms of fresh honey for use in its hotels.

"We believe that program can be a pragmatic and easy-to-replicate model for other communities in Sichuan and beyond," Fabiano said.

Wen Yijun, senior analyst with Oriental Securities in Beijing, agreed.

"Social responsibility is not just a research paper written for the annual report – it's part of a company's business strategy," he said.

"More foreign enterprises in China are finding that they have to give back to its billion-strong consumer base if they want to succeed," he said.

But implementing CSR in China can be an uphill battle.

In China, CSR has a stronger focus on philanthropy, while foreign countries consider that to be voluntary. With no legal concept of non-governmental organizations, Wen said foreign businesses are forced to forge partnerships with local officials.

"It is important to work with the local community and the local government," he said.

In its 12th five-year plan, the central government has included a chapter on social governance. Officials will be increasingly judged by their abilities in social fields.

Wen said this reflects something foreign businesses need to be aware of. "The government is now focusing more on what businesses can do for the country, not just what the country can do for them," he said.

"Bringing technology and capital is no longer enough," Wen said. "Businesses that help officials meet social targets are the ones that will be welcomed."

Lights out for 'Super Girls'

By Zhao Hongyi

Many TV viewers this month are fretting at the possible cancellation of *Super Girls*, a popular talent show on Hunan Satellite Television.

Super Girls, in which female contestants are whittled down via viewer votes over the course of several rounds of competition, debuted in 2004 to instant success.

The show became a hot topic for Chinese and foreign media, as it attracted tens of millions of viewers every week.

Young girls were given the rare opportunity to find success at unprecedented speed. Fans vicariously dreamt of quick profits and instant fame.

Li Yuchun, the first champion, was interviewed by *Time Magazine* and her picture appeared on the cover of that issue.

From the success of *Super Girls*, Hunan Satellite TV launched *Super Boys* the following year, and has held the two competitions in alternating years ever since.

These shows spawned similar ones such as *Talent Show* on the Oriental Channel of Shanghai, *Mum Selects Son-in-Law* on Channel Young and *Masters Select Apprentices* on Jiangsu Satellite Channel.

The producers of *Super Girls* and *Super Boys* are currently worried about the marketability of their shows' winners. The audience, it seems, is more interested in the personal lives and drama of the contestants than their singing ability.

Many fans have also expressed skepticism over the transparency of the competition, suggesting that producers, sponsors and advertisers are influencing the results.

Then there's this: as early as 2007, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) – the country's TV watchdog – criticized the shows as being overdone, said Li Hao, Hunan Satellite TV spokesman.

"It seems this year will be the final one," Li said. He remains hopeful, though, that the program will make a comeback in the future.



Hunan Satellite Television said it won't host the Super Girl TV show next year.

Xiao Chun/IC Photo

Comment

Loss of dreams

Super Girls was the first of its type in China. Some criticize it as a copy of American Idol, but it had its own characters. It's sad that it's coming to an end. Where are similar programs in China? What platform shows young people singing as they want, as they dream? This program has given us a sense of freedom; now, along with the show, that sense of freedom is gone.

— Liu Li, Shanghai Youth Daily

It's only a break

The program's original purpose was good: to find the next stars of the entertainment industry. But due to the channel's emphasis on entertainment, it emphasized appearance over skill and talent. Entertainment must be based on professionalism; only by building around that can a show achieve staying power.

— Lao Yan, commentator

The restrictions will not last long

I believe the reason the administration "regulated" this program was because some TV hosts made inappropriate comments and some didn't dress properly. The authorities warned the TV station, and this move is to force them to class up. These regulations might have a short-term effect on the shows, but it won't stop their development because there is high demand.

— Jin Yong, researcher

Editor's note

There will be similar shows, but in different tones

Super Girls and Super Boys fell victim to its own success. As it gained a broader following, judges continued to harp on contestants' appearances and quarrel with fans off-screen. Viewers also seemed more interested in the personal lives of contestants instead of their actual skills.

SARFT, however, had higher hopes for the show, urging it to add themes to its com-

petition each season, such as environmental protection, charity and gratitude.

The program, however, insisted on its style. It broke time restrictions and often lasted until midnight. It continued to promote the idea that people can get rich and famous overnight.

It took the example of Susan Boyle and Paul Potts from Britain's Got Talent but left

out the most important part: that Boyle and Potts became famous because first they were talented and worked hard.

In the end, the government has no intention of permanently keeping the shows off-air. Super Girls and Super Boys are simply too popular. But when they return, they will strike a completely different tone.

Debate of the week

Will you donate liver to save mom?

Peng Si, a 22-year-old Chinese overseas student, donated 60 percent of the right lobe of his liver to save his mother after she contracted hepatitis. The mother is slowly recovering, *Guangzhou Daily* reported.

Twenty-two years ago, Chen Xuemei, Peng's mother, risked her life to give birth to Peng and his sister after being infected with the Hepatitis C virus following a blood transfusion in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province.

Since 2009, her condition deteriorated considerably, leaving her suffering from frequent

comas and terminal hepatocirrhosis. The Guangzhou branch of PICC (People's Insurance Company of China), where Chen Xuemei worked, raised 160,000 yuan for her family.

Due to a lack of transplant donors, Chen's son, Peng, volunteered to give up part of his liver and postpone studying for a master's degree at the University of Northern Colorado. "I did what I needed to do to pay back my mom," he said.

After a 17-hour transplant operation, Peng was discharged from hospital after

making a positive recovery. He was awarded a certificate of special honor and was recognized as a "Best Image Ambassador" by the staff of the transplant department at the First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University.

This is the first case in the country of a child-to-parent transplant operation; the usual scenario is a parent-to-child transplant. "Our priority is the donor's safety," said Doctor Wu in charge of the case. "The regeneration ability of the liver is strong and he can recover in three months' time."

Smash a Benz, show you're green

The country's most high-profile philanthropist, Chen Guangbiao, has taken the public by surprise once again.

Ahead of World Car Free Day on September 22, he operated an excavator to smash his high-emission Mercedes Benz last Friday.

Chen said his action was aimed at telling businesspeople not to buy high-emission vehicles, or drive them too often if they have them, for the sake of environmental protection.

He said he has bought more than 200 bicycles for his employees.

Many people praised him for talking the talk and walking the walk. Others say he is merely put-

ting on a show.

"You have driven the car for 10 years, which means you have polluted the air for 10 years. You only smash it now since it will have to be discarded soon. Where has your environmental awareness been for the past decade?" said netizen Dalang Benben.

"If you're capable, smash all the high-emission Land Rovers owned by China's Red Cross Society. Then the entire nation will thank you," said another netizen Tangtang Shuishui.

Guangbiao's Benz will have to be scrapped under China's exhaust emission laws in three years.

(Agencies)

Ten-year odyssey in couture

French designer struggles to establish her brand in Beijing

By Han Manman

French designer Caroline Deleens has spent more than 10 years in Beijing. As the first foreigner to found a fashion brand in China, she dreamed of carving a niche for herself in this emerging market.

But globalization has a funny way of working. With more Chinese consumers lured by big brand names, Deleens has seen her business wither. Faced with increasing challenges, she realizes the need to reposition her company in order to survive the cutthroat environment.

"The city grew up very fast. I had to follow, but it's not been easy," said Caroline Deleens between sips of coffee at a cafe in Sanlitun Village, the epicenter of fashion in Beijing.

Deleens has operated the brand Mushi – "model from the West" – for the last decade. Her products mix Asian simplicity with avant-garde audacity.

Wearing a black dress that she designed herself, Deleens said she has shut down her only Mushi store in the city to focus on making stylish and elegant uniforms for luxury hotels.

"That kind of business is new and huge in China, and I'm the only French fashion designer in this big market so far," she said.

"I have no choice but to change my business orientation. I have to develop a business that is more exclusive," Deleens said.

Born in 1977 in Paris, Deleens' interest in fashion began at an early age due to influence by both sides of her family. Both her grandmothers worked in the fashion industry tailoring and producing furs. Creativity runs deep in her veins: her great-grandfather was an architect and her mother is a painter.

"When I was a child, my mother always bought me fashion magazines," she said. "I guess from that time, I was interested in fashion."

Deleens said she loved French haute couture designer Jean Paul Gaultier.

"To me, he is the best fashion designer in the world," she said, adding that when she was young, she pasted lots of Gaultier's pictures on her walls to remind herself to try to be a person like him.

Deleens first came to Beijing when she was 18, after her father was appointed CEO of a big French company's China division. She studied Mandarin and traditional Chinese painting.

But Deleens' interest in China began long before. Her father, after returning from business trips, would often bring his daughter dresses from the countries he visited. Deleens most loved the dresses from China.

"I quickly fell in love with Chinese elegance and refinement when I first saw the qipao my father brought me," Deleens said, adding that her



A model wearing an epidemic mask at a show during the SARS period, which marked a tough time for Deleens' business.



Deleens' products mix French elegance and Chinese refinement.



The love of Chinese history is apparent in Deleens' work.



Deleens was the first foreigner to found a fashion brand in China. Photos provided by Caroline Deleens

love for Chinese culture and history has made her life in Beijing very enjoyable.

After studying in Beijing for two years, Deleens returned to France to study women's luxury pret-a-porter at the world-renowned fashion school Esmod. After three years of study and work as a show assistant for Chanel and Lacroix, and as fashion designer for Lolita Lempicka, Deleens decided to return to Beijing to create her own clothing line that mixes French elegance and Chinese refinement.

"France is saturated with designers," she said. "It was very difficult for young designers to create a brand. But in Beijing, there was a new market for fashion, so I thought I'd have a better chance to be successful."

Unfortunately, Deleens chose a bad year to begin. She opened her first Mushi store in the Kerry Center in 2003, the year the SARS epidemic ravaged commerce in Beijing.

"That was a really tough period. Nobody came to the Mushi store, and we had no business at times," Deleens said.

She remembered the SARS

epidemic went public just two days before a fashion show. "Luckily, many people came to see the show," Deleens said, adding that it was a very unique experience: the models and spectators all wore masks.

Two months after the SARS scare died down, business improved.

"The Chinese prefer those brands not because they have unique products, but because they're well known. Fashion, from my understanding, is about creativity, not big names."

"In 2007, my business became very good. I began to earn some money," Deleens said.

Encouraged by the brisk business, Deleens decided to close the store at Kerry Center and open a bigger one inside LG Twin Tower that year.

She still regrets the decision to this day.

"I made a very bad choice then," she said. "The building is very beautiful, but few visitors

go inside."

In the past two years, Deleens has also witnessed a flurry of international brands trying to establish itself in town.

Deleens said Chinese people's idea of quality fashion is Versace, Christian Dior, Louis Vuitton, Gucci and a shopping bag of other high-end foreign labels. Consumers lap up these brands because they are considered status symbols.

"The Chinese prefer those brands not because they have unique products, but because they're well known," Deleens said.

"Fashion, from my understanding, is about creativity, not big names."

But this is a battle Deleens knows she will not win, which is why she has closed her Mushi store to focus on uniform design.

"As time goes by, as big brands become more common in the city, Chinese people may start to ask, 'What is real fashion?'" Deleens said. "They may look for something with quality and imagination, something unique. At that point, I'll be ready to present my designs."



Campaign attempts to reduce shark fin consumption

By Han Manman

WildAid China president Steve Trent is appealing to people to say no to shark fin soup, as certain breeds of shark are in danger of extinction.

As part of a nationwide initiative to educate the public on the importance of marine life, a month-long campaign co-organized by the National Aquatic Wildlife Conservation Association and WildAid China was launched Tuesday in Beijing, one of the major shark fin consumption cen-

ters in the country.

"Due to fast economic development and an increasing human population, many aquatic wildlife and habitats are under serious threat; some face extinction," said Niu Dun, vice minister of the Ministry of Agriculture, adding that the situation is near critical and that a national campaign is very much necessary.

"The initiative demonstrates the great effort the Chinese government has made for environmental conservation, and it is a very useful

way to promote Chinese people's awareness of aquatic wildlife protection," Trent said.

"It is vital to protect marine environments and species such as sharks immediately, which play a critical role in maintaining healthy marine ecosystems," Trent said.

He said approximately 79 million sharks are killed each year to meet the increasing demand for shark fin soup. Unfortunately, there is a lack of awareness and understanding about shark conservation and shark fin consumption

in China.

The education is even more important because with the dramatic growth in the Chinese economy, more people in China are able to afford shark fins, he said.

A recent survey by WildAid and the China Wildlife Conservation Association in 16 cities found that 35.1 percent of those surveyed had consumed shark fin soup, but 76.3 percent did not even know it was made from sharks.

Trent said eating shark fins is part of Chinese culture, so

changing the custom overnight is quite difficult. But encouraging people to think about the issue will help.

Various activities such as a painting competition and aquatic animal adoption will be held throughout the one-month campaign. More than 100 organizations across the country, including the National Aquatic Wildlife Conservation Association, Hong Kong Ocean Park and major aquariums, will also participate in the campaign.

Charity bazaar beyond borders



Diplomats from various embassies dressed in national costumes and transformed into hospitable salesmen and saleswomen. CFP Photo

By Han Manman

Last weekend's charity bazaar at Chaoyang Park raised more than 3 million yuan, money which will be used for renovations of less developed areas of Yunnan Province, said charity organizer Le Aimei, wife of China's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi.

The day-long event, called Love Knows No Borders, gathered 74 embassies and international organizations to set up booths serving food, traditional clothing, books and handicrafts.

Diplomats from various

embassies dressed in national costumes and transformed into hospitable salesmen and saleswomen, handing out brochures and DVDs of their countries. Foreign performers danced, and some formed small bands in front of their booths to attract visitors.

Many embassies posted photos of the event on their official microblogs, attracting many netizens' attention.

"I hope Shanghai can also hold such a charity event for me to attend. This kind of event is much better than

donating money directly," a netizen named Xiao Bai commented on the Greek embassy's microblog.

Xiao said the event also provides a good way for local people to experience different foreign cultures.

The foreign diplomats' charity event has been held since 2009 with different themes each year. Last year's theme was to help people with disabilities in China, and this year is about poverty alleviation in two mountain villages in Yunnan's Jinping and Malipo counties.

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Ukulele takes listeners into the contemplative heart of music

By Wei Xi

"Ready? Here we go." Dressed in casual T-shirts, Zhang Songtao and Irishman Richard Doran began to sing their song "The East Third Ring Road" on a patch of grass at Chaoyang Park.

"This song is for our great capital and its broken traffic," Zhang said.

The relaxing music attracted a number of passersby, both young and old, some of whom began singing along.

Such is the allure of the ukulele.

Zhang and Doran, who make up The Jolly Fellow Uku Band, are members of Beijing Ukulele Salon, a community of ukulele players.

The instrument is similar to a guitar but smaller, with only four strings. It was invented in Spain and popularized in Hawaii, said Hong Wenjun, one of the experienced players.

Hong, who has played the ukulele for two years and the guitar for 20, often teaches newcomers how to play the instrument, giving them advice according to his experiences.

"I used to think it was only a toy for kids," he said.

That mindset changed as he learned to play and accompanied to a friend in a harmonica competition in Singapore. They won.

"Compared with the guitar, the ukulele has a smaller fingerboard and fret, which makes it easier for



Beijing Ukulele Salon members at their monthly session at Chaoyang Park.

Photo by Guo Jingsong

players to play a wide pitch interval," he said. "And it is more convenient to carry wherever you go. You can just put it in your backpack."

Lin Hongbo is the organizer of the salon. About once a month, he will call up members for a practice. "We hope to provide a stage where non-professional players can have the opportunity to present themselves," he said.

Lin said many players lack the confidence to perform in public even if they play well.

Lin was inspired to create a ukulele organization last June when he was watching a performance by The Jolly Fellow Uku Band in a bar near

the Lama Temple.

"I use to think I was the only person playing, but I suddenly realized there were so many fellow players," he said. "And that's when I thought to organize a community, so we can enjoy performances every now and then."

The community now counts more than 100 members, with about a dozen showing up to each monthly session.

Compared with Hong and Lin, Zhang Xue is more of a novice. Zhang said she has only learned to play three songs. But what she lacks in experience, she makes up for in dedication: she bought

a ukulele without even knowing its name. "I searched 'four-string small guitar' on Taobao and, fortunately, found it."

Zhang said she can't really articulate why she loves the instrument. "But I feel happy playing it," she said. "My life has become more colorful, as I've learned many other interesting instruments from fellow players."

Beijing Ukulele Salon

Where: Alanda, 701, C1 Chaowai SOHO, 26 Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Varies

Email: surak_1@hotmail.com

Event

Volunteers needed at Beijing Buddies

Anyone willing to offer his or her help is able to make a difference in the lives of migrant children. Sign up for a day, a month or a year. Once a week, Beijing Buddies sends its volunteers to visit partner migrant schools to spend a half-day with the students. All that's required is enthusiasm.

Where: Volunteers are required to show up at the Guomao subway station, Exit C, at 8:30 am on Saturdays

When: Every Saturday, 8:30 am - 2 pm

Email:

dbateman@mcfchina.org

Cost: Free

Mashup co-ed dodgeball

"If you can dodge a wrench, you can dodge a ball" - so says the coach in the film *Dodgeball*. Feel free to put the theory to test, as dodgeball is coming to Beijing. This game is a fun way for you to relieve the stress from long hours of work and shut up that friend who never stops talking. This will be the most popular league in the capital, so sign up fast.

Where: Mashup Sport and Social, Dongsi Olympic Community Sports Culture Center

When: Every Monday

Email:

info@mashupasia.com

Cost: 500 yuan (eight weeks of play, league shirt and all equipment)

(By Wei Xi)

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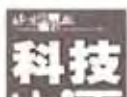


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Choosing the best mobile service for you



Foreigners who are new to Beijing often find it confusing to select a service provider.

CFP Photo

By Wei Xi

Like many newcomers, Soomin Kim, a college freshman from South Korea, is trying to sort out her living situation. Among the questions she asked was, "What company's SIM card is best?"

This week, *Beijing Today* offers an introduction to SIM card service providers.

General Information

There are three major mobile companies in China: China Mobile, China Unicom and China Telecom.

China Telecom SIM cards require the purchase of a specific kind of cell phone called E-surfing.

SIM cards from the other two companies are compatible with most Chinese cell phones, or any phone that accepts the same type of SIM. Make sure you know if your phone is compatible with the GSM or CDMA network, or both.

It's always cost effective to purchase a calling or data plan with your card. There are a number of different ones to choose from, depending on how many calls and texts you require each month.

Question 1: If I only use my

cell phone to make limited calls, mostly in Beijing, what kind of service should I get?

Answer: Two recommendations here. The first is China Telecom, which charges only 3 yuan per month as a monthly fee. All phone calls you receive in Beijing are free. Outgoing calls within Beijing cost between 0.11 and 0.14 yuan per minute. However, when you are traveling outside the city, you need to pay 0.4 yuan per minute whenever you make or receive a call. Text messages are 0.1 yuan per message.

The second recommendation is China Mobile's M-Zone service. The monthly fee is 11 yuan, and it includes 60 free text messages. All received calls within Beijing are free. Between 9 am and 9 pm, calls to Beijing-based customers are 0.2 yuan per minute, while those outside Beijing are 0.3 yuan per minute. During other times, it's 0.12 yuan and 0.2 yuan per minute, respectively. Texts after the allotted 60 are 0.1 yuan per message.

Question 2: What about international calls?

Answer: All three companies provide international calling services. Here are two options from

Table A: Add 12593 before the number you want to call to get a discount

Nations and areas	Charge
US, Canada, Hong Kong	0.4 yuan/minute
Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Macao, Taiwan	0.7 yuan/minute
Australia, UK, Germany, France, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, New Zealand, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Holland, Belgium, Austria, Portugal, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Finland, Brazil, Russia	2 yuan/minute
Others	4.6 yuan/minute

Table B: If you pay a 30-yuan-per-month fee, here are the costs for calls

Nations and areas	Free minutes	Charge beyond that
US, Canada, Singapore, Hong Kong	100 minutes	0.4 yuan/minute
South Korea	70 minutes	0.6 yuan/minute
Taiwan, Macao, Malaysia, Thailand	40 minutes	1 yuan/minute
Japan, Australia, France	30 minutes	1.5 yuan/minute
UK, Germany, Italy, Russia, India, Vietnam	20 minutes	2 yuan/minute

China Mobile (see Table A and Table B).

Beijing Today also recommends buying an international phone card for landlines, as using landlines is cheaper for international calls.

Question 3: Where can I refill my account?

Answer: The most convenient way is by purchasing prepaid phone cards at newsstands. Be aware that when you buy a 50-yuan card, you may only get 48 yuan's worth of credit.

You can also go directly into

China Mobile, China Unicom or China Telecom stores.

Online recharging is also now possible. Visit your service providers' websites for more information if you can navigate the Chinese sites.

Question 4: How can I check my account balance?

Answer: Websites or via text. For China Mobile users, send "CXYE" to 10086. For China Unicom users, send "102" to 10010. For China Telecom users, send "102" to 10001. You will get a reply within minutes.

How to find a job and obtain a work visa

By Zhao Hongyi

More young foreigners are arriving in Beijing these days, and while many simply pass through, lots of out-of-towners decide to settle in China. But how do they find a job that lets them stay long-term?

Relatively speaking, it wasn't too long ago that the average foreigner in China had no shot of obtaining a work visa. After the country joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, changes came swiftly.

Prospective employees can visit the annual recruiting fair held by the National Administration of Foreign Expert's Affairs, usually in April or May at Swissôtel Beijing. Every

year, hundreds of jobs throughout the country are offered, mostly in Beijing and Shanghai.

For those in other provinces provincial offices will have information.

Before signing any contracts though, employees are advised to be absolutely certain the contract is clear about duties, salaries, holidays and welfare benefits.

Most foreigners can expect a monthly income of 5,000 yuan. Ask employers about possible pensions, health insurance, unemployment insurance and everyday subsidies.

Sometimes, employers are willing to transfer those benefits into cash.

Most Chinese employees get 5 to 15 days of vacation every year, excluding the five days for Spring Festival and the days for National Day in October.

Another important issue to ask about is the expiration date on your visa and work permit. Remember to leave yourself a month's time to apply for both the work visa and permit. Colleagues can probably help you sort out the paperwork.

Many foreigners feel cheated by employers who promise work visas only at high prices. Make sure you ask about this if it's an issue for you. Most companies are able to reimburse you for visa application costs.



Beijing has many job fairs every year, where qualified foreigners can find a job.

CFP Photo

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A new look for Dashilan

By Chu Meng

Whether to build a new or remodel the old is always a big question for Beijing. Many of its aging hutongs and courtyards have gone unprotected, weathering away amid a thickening forest of skyscrapers. Many have been subject to abrupt, blind commercial development imbuing them with a kind of spiritual rot.

The Dashi'an-Liulichang historical and cultural protection area has somehow escaped such decay this year's NOTCH Nordic Art Festival and the first Beijing Design Week will be held in the renovated hutong to show off the results of a three-year project to protect the area's heritage.

Li Shu, planning director of Beijing Dashi'an Investment Limited, is a keen-witted and capable man in his 40s. Unlike most of his peers at the Xicheng District government's Dashi'an Street Committee, he dresses and behaves much like an artist.

Last Saturday, Li visited the hutong, courtyards and shops of Dashi'an-Liulichang historical and cultural protection area, which have been the focus of his six-year restoration effort.

With him were a group of Nordic artists, participants in the NOTCH Nordic Festival that opens on September 23. The artists, mostly from Scandinavia, will soon descend on the area for the first Beijing Design Week, which will open the same day.

"It is the first time the renovated Dashi'an-Liulichang has hosted fashion and design events. It is an opportunity for us to present our achievements and test this new method of protection, which we call 'hutong- and resident-friendly renovation'."

"In theory, no one opposes hutong protection – of course, reality is different. The sad fact is that whenever we knock down an ancient building, we lose it forever."

The area is home to 20 homes of historic celebrities, 20 temples, 60 Peking Open stages, 40 historic brothels and 150 courtyards. It stretches from Qianmen West Avenue, south from Zhusishan West Avenue, west to Nanxichuan Street and east to the former Qianmen Commercial Street. The area is the historic center of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). But like most ancient buildings throughout the country, many homes have fallen into a state of disrepair. Local residents coped with extreme population density and outdated infrastructure.

It is the only residential area in the hutong that has remained unchanged since the Ming Dynasty," Li said.

"Preserving this was extremely important, especially after the demolition of historic neighborhoods in the Xanyukou area and rampant commercialization of Nanhuoguo Xiang."

After many rejected plans, Li and his team settled on a preservation model in 2006. It required 90 percent of the original architectural style, including historical and cultural relics. However, the remaining residents had to stay.

"Only when an old area remains inhabited can it stay alive. Evacuation and demolition kill history and culture," Li said.

After restoration of the abandoned courtyards, commercial groups will be allowed to move in. Some will be designers' studios, artistic spaces and office houses.

"New commercial patterns will link the ancient area to the younger generation, which will keep it alive," Li said.

The project's ultimate goal is to raise living standards in the area and improve housing conditions. Balancing that with historical protection was a complicated task.

As Beijing's most important renovation project of the 12th Five-Year Plan, the Dashi'an-Liulichang renovation program began in 2008. All renovation maintained the original architectural style, making it blend in with the larger Qianmen Avenue area.

Yang Lei, organizer of the NOTCH Nordic Art Festival, is among the first people helping to test the pros and cons of this new method of protection.

During the festival, themed "Recycling Creativity,"

"Historical streets are places of human activity. The only way to maintain the original appearance is to relocate all the residents and build these areas into museums, just like Zhoushuang in Jiangsu Province. Unfortunately, Beijing has a large population and cannot afford to give up any space. Any protection method used here has to keep these homes in use."



People are coming back to the hutong in Dashi'an-Liulichang historical area to rediscover the hutong's heritage. CFP Photo



Icelandic artists are working on their new designs in an abandoned factory in Dashi'an. Photos by Yin Si

Daguanlou Peking Opera House is one of hundreds of historical courtyards, elderly homes and stores in Dashi'an-Liulichang area. CFP Photo



Nordic artists used old clothing collected from residents create her new designs. CFP Photo



Gudrun Kristin Arnadottir, an Icelandic artist, collaborated with two Chinese artists to finish a mural installation using volcanic ash from Iceland and shattered glass collected in the Dashi'an area. CFP Photo

The Xinhai Revolution in an American's eyes

By Wei Xi

2011 marks the 100th Anniversary of the Xinhai Revolution. Many books are being published to memorialize and explore that significant event.

Unlike most of the books, which are being written by contemporary scholars with the aid of old documents, *The Chinese Revolution* was written at the time of the revolution by Judson Brown, an American missionary.

Brown was an early Sinologist and the author of other books, such as *The Nearer and Farther East* and *The Mastery of the Far East*. He had close contact with Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) officials such as Yuan Shikai, as well as with leaders of the revolutionary party.

Brown was in China from 1901 to 1902, and again in 1909, as a missionary. He used the opportunity to conduct several large-scale social investigations and write 17 diaries.

Using these diaries, Brown completed *The Chinese Revolution*, an account of China at the fall of the Qing Dynasty. It studies the industrial, commercial, political, diplomatic, educational, religious and social conditions of a nation in change.

The text also details negotiations and struggles between Chinese authorities of the day.

"The scenes described in the book are very different from what we usually imagine," said Fu Zhiwei, one of the editors of the Chinese edition.

Fu, who studied the Xinhai Revolution from the revolutionary party's perspective, was inspired to see Brown interpretation of the revolution from other viewpoints.

"It makes me realize the revolution was far more complicated. We cannot analyze that period of time from a single perspective," he said.

Brown relied on many firsthand sources and materials that are rarely accessible in domestic studies of the revolution, making the book a valuable historical reference, said Kang Di, another editor. "More important is that many of the questions the author raised a hundred years ago are still



The Chinese Revolution

By Arthur Judson Brown, translated and edited by Kang Di, Fu Zhiwei, Li Yuejing, Wang Zhaoyi, Xu Xian and Shi Weijun, 291pp, The People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 30 yuan.

waiting for answers."

"The rediscovery of the old book was an accident," said Li Danyang, an employee at the publishing house. She said she was searching for related material on the Internet when she stumbled across Brown's book.

Initially, she planned to use it as a reference. However, after obtaining a copy and reading it in full, Di thought it was worth publishing in Chinese.

The translation was handled by a team of six translators and editors.

"When the original book was published

in 1911, the *New York Times* said it was a must-read for foreigners hoping to understand the Xinhai Revolution. Today, it is also a must-read for Chinese people as well," Di said.

Ji Peng, host of the book launch, said Sunday that we often force ourselves to find a reason or influence for such revolution, but Brown's book shows that the process matters.

"As Brown said in the preface, he did not aim to draw a conclusion for the revolution, but to provide some reliable materials for others to refer to," he said.

Film star returns as a writer

By He Jianwei

Taiwanese film star Brigitte Lin made a long-awaited return to the spotlight last Sunday at Peking University Hall with her first book, *Window in the Window*.

Fans stood at the entrance for almost two hours waiting for the book launch.

It has been 17 years since Lin left the film industry. Now 56 years old, she hopes to make a name for herself as a writer with a collection of 45 essays.

Topics include memories of her filmmaking days, anecdotes about friends and relatives and thoughts on life.

"I'm sick of being known as a beauty. I'm a writer. I stepped into the film industry 17 years after I finished middle school. At age 38, I left the entertainment world," Lin said.

The essays collected in the book were previously published in newspapers during the last seven years. Lin's first article was printed by Ming Pao, after Hong Kong writer Ma Ka Fai asked her to submit a column three times.

"He passed me his name card every time we met. I asked him whether he was asking me to write a column because I was a star. He told me he thought I could write," she said. "I was expecting him to make heavy revisions to



Window in the Window

By Brigitte Lin, 408pp, Guangxi Normal University Press, 88 yuan

my piece. When he didn't, I decided to keep on writing."

Her first article was a memorial for

James Wong Jim, a well-known columnist, actor, film director, screenwriter and songwriter in Hong Kong, who died in 2004. His lyrics to "Below the Lion Rock" became the spirit of the island.

In "A Laugh in Blue Sea," Lin recalls that the first person who gave her a chance to write was Wong: it wasn't until he died that she dared to pick up a pen.

Her debut book has been acclaimed by many celebrities for her succinct and vivid descriptions.

"I'm familiar with many of the people she wrote about. It's easy to write about oneself, but difficult to write about others. Even if she hadn't written their names, I would know exactly whom she was talking about," said Jiang Wen, director of the film *Let the Bullets Fly* and host of the book launch.

The title of the book refers to her 1973 debut movie, the Chiung Yao romance titled *Outside the Window*. Chiung once said she knew Lin would write a book, but did not expect that she would do so well.

Chiung's husband, publisher of Taiwan's Crown Publishing Company, said Lin may be Taiwan's best new writer of the last 38 years.

Trends Lounge book listing

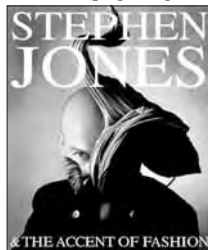
Located at The Place, Trends Lounge is a bookstore and cafe with a wide selection of books about international art, design and architecture.



Fashioning Fashion: European Dress in Detail, 1700-1915

By Sharon Sadako Takeda, Kaye Durland Spilker and John Galliano, 224pp, Prestel USA, 540 yuan

Luxurious textiles, exacting tailoring and lush trimmings abound in this glorious volume that celebrates the evolution of European dress through two centuries. Drawing on the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's internationally known fashion collection, this book tells the story – in words and pictures – of fashion's technical development from the Age of Enlightenment to World War I, a period when fashionable dress underwent sweeping change.



Stephen Jones & the Accent of Fashion

By Hamish Bowles, Andrew Bolton, Suzy Menkes, Penny Martin and Anna Piaggi, 240pp, Antique Collectors Club, 680 yuan

This is the first collection of the works of legendary British hat designer Stephen Jones. It documents a 30th anniversary exhibition of Stephen Jones' Millinery, which featured more than 120 items along with its collaborations with international fashion designers over three decades.



Power to the Imagination

By Jurgen Doring, 168pp, Hirmer Publishers, 380 yuan

From the late 19th century to the Vietnam Era to Robert Indiana's *Hope* sculpture for Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, avant-garde artists have long drawn on the dual inspirations of utopian ideals and history to make striking posters that reflect the demand for equality, tolerance and freedom.

(By He Jianwei)

A real hero

Trilogy of terror, struggle and despair



By He Jianwei

Three seemingly unrelated works comprise Li Wei's latest solo exhibition, a trilogy of pieces depicting a hero's life of terror, struggle and despair.

As he writes in the preface to the exhibition, "A hero is not a manufactured idol for people to admire, but a human being with all the complexity of human nature."

A true hero is one who faces death head-on.

A roving stage light illuminates a group of boys and girls dressed like acrobats in *Chorus*, the first piece in Li's *Hero* exhibition.

Each is as tall as a nine-year-old child, but all have identical actions and facial expressions. Their faces show an unearthly calm despite experiencing repeated terrors – they have no sign of life.

Such children appear each year on CCTV's Spring Festival Gala in their beautiful and shining clothes. Most come from rural areas and train for many years just to appear in the gala.

"They appear as products designed to please the audience," Li said.

"We live in a world that is obsessed about pleasing others and being pleased. In the age of consumption, humans are like merchandise."

The second piece is *ICU*, an intensive care unit with four vegetative patients. A strong smell of formalin pervades the room, where

patients lie on their beds with their eyes open and tubes coming out of their chests. All are connected to catheters.

While they look alive in their beds, no one knows why they are in the unit. Some are missing legs and some have dark purple bruises. Their gender is determinable only by primary sex organs.

"Someone told me this piece was particularly unsettling to look at. However, if you have had a relative who has to stay in an ICU, you will know this is a normal scene. I am only showing that in front of death, everyone is equal," he said.

The last piece is a group of peacocks standing on green carpet. Their tail feathers display bright colors, but their faces look horror-struck.

For a peacock, spreading out its plumage requires great strength and effort. "The male peacock will spread its feathers to attract a mate, even though it looks painful," he said. "People think it is beautiful

when a peacock spread its fan, because they always see from a great distance. However, when seen up close, it is not beautiful at all."

His studio has two peacocks nearby that he often observes. "When they prepare to spread their fans, their pupils shrink and they tremble all over. The look actually reminds me of the face of a person who is constipated," he said.

Unlike most artists in his age group, the 30-year-old has penetrating eyes that look beneath the surface. Both the children in *Chorus* and the peacocks come in beautiful packages designed to please the observer, but in the end both will end up like the people in the ICU.

"Compared with other animals, humans are cowardly and fragile when facing death," he said. "When a hero comes face-to-face with death, it is death in reality, not a portrait of death."

Li began work on the three installations in October 2009 and finished last month.



Chorus

Photos by He Jianwei



Peacock

Photos provided by Today Art Museum



ICU

Hero: Li Wei's Solo Exhibition

Where: Building 3, Today Art Museum,
32 Baizhuan Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until October 3, 10 am – 5 pm
Admission: 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 5876 9804

It's cashmere time!

By Annie Wei

The blue skies and pleasant weather should be a good indication that it's autumn, and there's no better time than now for cashmere products.

This week, *Beijing Today* spoke with Elide Zhang, a designer who owns the brand Non Season. Her products are not the cheap kind you'd find at Yashow or Silk Street, nor the overly priced high-end stuff from foreign brands.

Before moving back to Beijing in 2008 and starting her cashmere brand, Zhang worked in the US as a designer for several luxury brands.

Now Zhang has to work even harder, from purchasing quality cashmere to designing to liaising with factories to selling to customers.

Zhang said this season, cashmere has been applied to items such as hot pants and leg warmers. Many brands have gone with oversized cashmere women's wear that, when worn, look like they're borrowed from boyfriends.

Cashmere products are available in more colors this season, too. Apart from traditional gray, light and dark colors such as lake blue, mustard yellow, English green and berry red are all recommended. These colors can brighten your mood during an unexpectedly cold day.

"Cashmere is also used with other materials, like fur, or weaved with rivets," Zhang said. Different materials can generate conflicts that produce a good effect. Tight leggings with a loose top look is the style from the 1980s, while cashmere with rivets is called "soft rock 'n' roll," or the "Kate Moss image," she said.

For this season, leopard is still in. Zhang said Non Season has some new leopard-patterned scarves, with a twist of Chinese ink painting.

"Many women prefer all black or gray during the winter. Adding such a scarf can finish the look," she said.

Also recommended is Non Season's oversized scarf. As cashmere has good tensile properties, some scarves can be extended five meters.

"Scarves that can be opened like a blanket are very useful," Zhang said. They can be folded for convenient transport while giving women protection in an air-conditioned room.

"For people who take long flights, a scarf can help you avoid a sore throat the next day," Zhang said.

Zhang is adamant about maintaining a high quality of cashmere.

"Quality cashmere

should be more than 35 millimeters long," she said. However, quality cashmere is not cheap.

"If you spend 300 yuan for cashmere at Yashow or the Silk Market, it is not 100 percent cashmere," she said.

Many cashmere products are made with wool or polymethyl. Many products made of polymethyl can make them feel soft and comfortable to the touch. However, they can't compare to genuine cashmere.

Zhang's husband, who is from South Korea, likes to introduce customers to different cashmere products. Nothing is quite like feeling it in person.

Many products in Non Season are reasonably priced: a double-layered 100-percent cashmere coat is priced at less than 10,000 yuan, while similar ones cost 40,000 yuan from department stores; many 100-percent big-sized cashmere scarves start from 2,000 yuan.

The store also has cute cashmere baby outfits for toddlers. Home décor cashmere products are also popular among customers.

Non Season

Where: A320, 3F, Nali Patio, 81 Sanlitun Jiuba Jie, Chaoyang District
Open:

1:30-10:30 pm

Tel: 5208 6136



Models in various cashmere garments

Photos provided by anyshopstyle.com

Authentic Xiamen cuisine available in town



Fruit bamboo

By Annie Wei

Xiamen, a lovely city in Fujian Province, is known for its scenic spots and traditional food, which is similar to the cuisine found in southern Taiwan. This week, *Beijing Today* invited Lin Shuo, a senior food reporter from the national magazine *Tianxia Meishi*, to introduce his hometown cuisine.

Top 6 Xiamen dishes you must try



Baizhuo octopus (quick-boiled octopus)

Photos by Lin Shuo

By Lin Shuo

Fotiaoqiang

Fotiaoqiang is a well known Fujian dish made of chicken, duck and 18 other ingredients, with a lot of seasoning. Fotiaoqiang in English means "a monk jumps over the wall": once upon a time, a monk stayed in a temple next to a restaurant, where he could always smell the dishes; one day, he couldn't resist anymore and jumped over the wall for the food.

The Xiamen version of fotiaoqiang comes without duck gizzard, tripe and pork belly; it uses more delicate foods such as fish belly, abalone and sea cucumber.

Traditional fotiaoqiang is thick and greasy, but the Xiamen version is light, with a jelly texture due to prolonged stewing.

Shizizha

A traditional southern China cuisine originated from the fishing villages along Xiamen over hundreds of years, but its food is only available in two cities – Xiamen and Jinmen, Taiwan. The shizizha dish from this cuisine is made from sea oysters prepared with fine salt, ginger juice, garlic, pepper and



Lin Shuo

sweet potato powder. All ingredients are put into a bowl and fried until crispy.

Xueshan Lüzhushun

The bamboo shoots are selected and shipped from Taiwan. They taste sweet and don't have the bitterness of normal bamboo shoots. Such bamboo shoots are also called fruit bamboo because they have a refreshing quality to them.

Ink fish noodle

No wonder people say there's a lot in common between Chinese and Italian food. Xiamen has hand-made noodles made of fresh ink fish

juice. It has a nice smell and delicious taste, and is chewy as well. Eat the noodles with a lot of peppers while hot.

Baizhuo Zhangyu

Octopus is available everywhere, but baizhuo octopus is Xiamen's specialty. "Baizhuo" is a common Chinese way of cooking: simply put ingredients in boiled water for less than a minute. But Xiamen's baizhuo octopus requires more complicated procedures, including: freezing the fresh octopus first, defreezing, kneading and rubbing to soften it, then boiling it, then placing it in iced mineral water. When served, it tastes cold, fresh and crispy. Diners should eat it with sauce made of sugar, mustard, Xiamen spicy sauce, soy sauce and black vinegar. The key is the amount of mustard used.

Duck meat fine noodle

It's a traditional Xiamen countryside dish. The duck must be local; the soup is stewed slowly with more than a dozen herbs and ingredients. The dish is so delicious. Normally, the chef prepares the dish according to the season. The soup is light for spring and summer but thicker and stronger in autumn and winter.



Fotiaoqiang

Three recommended Xiamen restaurants

By Lin Shuo

Xiamen Shangwu Huiguan

This is the only restaurant in town that exclusively serves Xiamen food, but the dishes aren't quite as authentic as the Xiamen cuisine I'm used to. But generally speaking, all dishes are quite delicate. The haimujian, a traditional dish made of oyster, egg and garlic, is the best I have ever eaten in Beijing. For simple Xiamen dishes, all ingredients are guaranteed to be fresh.

Where: 1F, Xiamen Shangwu Huiguan, 46 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District

Open: 11 am – 9 pm

Tel: 8211 8698

Cost: Average 100 yuan per person

Bamin Shifu

This is the Fujian provincial restaurant. For many years, it has invited famous chefs to prepare quality food for diners. The restaurant offers few promotions, but over the years has attracted many customers with its quality.

Where: 3F, Fujian Dasha, 11 Sanqu, Anzhen Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 9:30 am – 2:30 pm, 5:30 – 11:30 pm

Tel: 6442 8833 – 5855

Cost: Average 200 yuan per person

Minweixuan

Although Fujian dishes here are not as light as back home, they're still recommended, especially for diners who prefer stronger flavors.

Where: 1F, Bamin Bingguan, 2 Madian Nan Lu, Haidian District

Open: 9:30 am – 2:30 pm, 5:30–11:30 pm

Tel: 8200 5551 / 7777

Cost: Average 70 yuan per person



Ink fish noodle (cuttle dish noodle)

Promoting Chinese style reggae



Photos provided by Long Shen Dao

By Wei Xi

Sitting on the terrace of a cafe, three men, Guo Jian, Niu Mu and Gao Xu, lazily lean back in their chairs, basking in sunshine. Their faces are expressionless and tough, but their dreadlocks and casual T-shirts make them look mellow and laid-back.

They belong to Long Shen Dao, a Chinese reggae band that is slowly expanding its international fanbase.



Fei Fei, keyboard player



Gao Xu, guitarist



Niu Mu, guitarist

The band came together in early 2007 with six members who had all been fighting for 10 years for a share of fame in the rock scene.

"At first we only wanted to sample some reggae," said Guo Jian, lead vocalist and bassist. "But later, we discovered that what we were playing was really good."

The band's first public performance under the name Long Shen Dao came on January 6, 2007. "It was free, but at the end, the bar owner had to close his door to prevent people from coming because the bar was overflowing," said guitarist Gao Xu.

The success of their first performance gave the Long Shen Dao men lots of confidence. They realized that reggae, which was popular during the 1960s and '70s, still resonates with today's listeners. "So we thought we could keep doing this and share our understanding of reggae with the public," Gao said.

Having played heavy music for

years, Long Shen Dao is relishing the slower-paced, quieter reggae style, which is also more appropriate for expressing the band members' feelings.

But Long Shen Dao doesn't like to be tied to reggae tradition. The band has added Chinese instruments such as the guzheng for a creative twist in its sound.

"We want to create something of our own style, something unique and something Chinese, because we are a Chinese band," Gao said.

Members of Long Shen Dao also want to promote Daoism in their music, as they believe Daoism is essential to Chinese culture, influencing it in many ways.

The "Dao" in the band name, in fact, refers to Daoism - "the way."

"Long," as Guo explained, is the dragon, a symbol of China and Chinese people.

"Shen," meanwhile, means "god."

"Long is a result of conscious work, representing something dynamic, while shen is static," Guo

said. "The combination of the two mirrors an idea in Daoism."

The name was formed spontaneously. Guo woke up one morning and the three words, for whatever reason, passed through his brain. "So I wrote it down immediately, and later the others thought it wasn't bad," Guo said.

Over the years, Long Shen Dao has performed in bars such as MAO Livehouse, Yugongyishan and Dos Kolegas. Its first album, *Tai Chi Reggae*, was released earlier this year on January 1. Within several months, thousands of copies had been sold, and currently there are fewer than 100 left.

"We made a music video that will be released in about two weeks," Gao said. "Our first album will be re-released, and we are creating songs for our second album, due for next year."

Fans can see Long Shen Dao tonight when it takes the stage at Yugongyishan to celebrate the club's seventh-year anniversary.



Guo Jian, lead vocalist and bassist

Long Shen Dao in Performing of Yugongyishan's Seven Years Anniversary

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District
When: September 23, 8 pm
Admission: 70 yuan advance purchase, 100 yuan at the door
Tel: 6404 2711

Film exhibition captures the stages of life

“Personal history is history, and contemporary history is also history.”



By Zhang Dongya

To Live In China, an indie film screening at Iberia Center for Contemporary Art ended Tuesday. A total of 24 films were shown during the week, each telling the story of Chinese life from cradle to grave.

Unlike other screenings, the films were curated as mini-exhibitions. Their topics were childhood, elementary school, middle age and death.

Zhang Xianmin, one of the curators, said he believes that “personal history is history, and contemporary history is also history.” He hoped the films could show contemporary life through the experiences of the individual.



The 24 films in the *To Live In China* film exhibition display the story of Chinese life from cradle to grave.

Photos provided by Iberia Center Contemporary Art

Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, located in 798 Art District, is usually closed on Mondays. Last Monday, it made an exception for the 111-minute documentary *Floating Dust*. The movie was followed by a forum about film in the era of Weibo.

Compared with most commercial movies, *Floating Dust* is a long film. It was shot by Huang Wenhai, an independent documentary director who was born in the 1970s, and shows the “ridiculously chaotic world of the underprivileged” during the 2003 SARS epidemic.

It was classified as “Middle-Age” in the exhibition, along with *For Every Minute That I Live, I'll Enjoy 60 Seconds*, *The Bride and The Cockfighter*, which showed the hard lives of middle-aged people in small towns.

“My life is unusual, but at the same time it's dull and tasteless. I have a hard time defining the meaning of ‘today,’” said Zhang Xianmin, curator of the film screening and a professor at Beijing Film Academy. “I need a description, a statement, an innocent belief that truth could be discerned from images.”

“I tried to divide human history into several phases and organize film screenings based on the theme of each. The goal was to reflect the social structure, personal experience and public discourse of these phases,” he said.

“I like this theme,” said Cui Weiping, a professor of Beijing Film Academy. “‘Lifeline’ is something with a defined length. I saw nearly one third of the films screened at this event, but they all offered more through their classification.”

Zhang founded Indie Screening Alliance of Art Space (ISAAS) this year with Zuo Jing, now an assistant professor in the College of News and Communications at Anhui University. The event *To Live in China* is the first program of the alliance, and was previously held in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province in April.

“Our original intent was to screen independent films in the way we curate exhibitions. It's different from the casual screenings of the past,” Zuo said.

The alliance will make two proposals each year and tour associated art spaces. *To Live in China* will have a tour screening in Southwest Jiaotong University Contemporary Art Research Terminal and Thousand Plateaus Art Space in Chengdu in October, in Chongqing in November and in Shenzhen in December.

“Commercial films are not screened this way. But even at independent screenings, films are usually only grouped by when they were made or who shot them. But I think we should dig out the value of the films and provide some analysis so viewers come away with a deeper understanding,” Zhang said.

Chinese independent film had its genesis in the 1980s, and in the more than 20 years since has produced a number of excellent works. However, for the first decade it had no way to reach the public.

By the end of the 1990s, films were being screened in bars, universities, bookstores, libraries and art centers. A few independent film events began being held in Beijing, Shanghai and cities like Nanjing, Chengdu, Kunming and Chongqing.

The founding of the Indie Screening Alliance of Art Space is expected to promote the distribution of such independent films.

When asked where people could see the films after the screening, Zhang was at a loss.

He said that although they would like to do longer screenings to meet the demand for documentaries, it is impossible at present.

“In 10 or 15 years, Beijing and Shanghai may have two or three venues like art centers available for documentary and independent films. In cities like Nanjing and Wuhan, there will be one such place. They may be able to seat 300 to 500 people, but they will screen art films all year-round,” Zhang said. “That's my forecast.”

But that prospect depends on the government to support the arts in place of the current private backers.

Zhang established an Independent Film Fund last year to subsidize four films each year. It provides 60,000 yuan to each selected feature film and 20,000 yuan to each documentary. Last year, it supported two documentaries and two feature films.

The greatest challenge facing independent film directors is locating money to support the recording of new works.

There are fewer than eight non-profit film funds in Beijing compared with the more than 6,000 spread across the US, where 80 percent of independent films can successfully apply for aid.

The discrepancy may be due to the pace at which China supports non-profit industries.

Ancient gems in Yuxian, Zhangjiakou

By Zhang Dongya

About 200 kilometers to Beijing's west is an ancient county called Yuxian, which has more than 3,000 years of history. Located in southwest Zhangjiakou, Hebei Province, Yu County has abundant historical sites, including nearly 200 ancient fortresses and a considerable number of ancient towns, temples, theaters and old houses.

At Zhangjiakou Tourism Development Conference, which was held in Yu County last Thursday, Yu County was identified as one of Zhangjiakou's "excellent tourism counties."



Local operas are still being staged at the old theater in Yu County. CFP Photo



Refined carvings in the main hall of Yuhuang Ge CFP Photo



Yu County, with more than 3,000 years of history, has preserved many ancient buildings.



Drum Tower of Yuhuang Ge



Yuhuang Ge is a well-preserved building on the town's old street. CFP Photo

Yu County in Hebei Province was called Yu Zhou in the Later Jin Dynasty (936-947), which is why hotel, restaurant and shop signs still use "Yu Zhou" – a not-so-subtle reminder of the county's close relationship with the distant past.

The town is a living museum, with its ancient gates, houses, temples, pagodas and theaters. Most are well preserved, despite not being tourist sites (or because of that reason). Walking through town is like strolling the pages of a history book.

An ancient street with old gates

Yu Zhou was once called Iron Town for its high walls and strong gates. There used to be three principal gates: Anding Men in the east, Qingyuan Men in the west and Jingxian Men in the south. To the north is Yuhuang Ge, an ancient temple to worship the Jade Emperor. It was built mainly for repelling invaders.

The east and west gates have been demolished, though the south gate and the temple in the north still remain.

From the south, pedestrians on the ancient street will see a grand gate with a high archway – Jingxian Men. It has undergone renovations, but retains its old walls and structures. The street is as narrow as it's always been, with small shops crowded along both sides. People and vehicles go in and out of the old gate, a sight of bustle.

On the other side of the street is Yuhuang Ge, with another high gate similar to the one at Jingxian Men. It was built in 1377 during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and restored in later dynasties. It has two yards; in the backyard is the Hall of Jade Emperor, and in the front is Hall of Heavenly Kings. The front also includes 15 meditation halls.

The main building was built with multiple glaze tiles. Also, a bell tower was built in the southeast and a drum tower in the southwest. The refined temple has attracted many poets and literary figures throughout history.

Old pagoda and city walls

To the west of Jingxian Gate is Nan'ansi Pagoda, standing 28 meters high. You can see it among the low dwellings from a distance. As its name suggests, the pagoda once belonged to a temple called Nan'an, but only the pagoda remains.

The ancient pagoda was supposedly built during the North Wei (386-557) and rebuilt during the Liao (907-1125) and Jin (1115-1234) dynasties. It is an octagonal building, with 13 layers. Aeolian bells hang from each layer. The base has delicate carvings of an animal's head on each side.

Today, a courtyard surrounds the pagoda. It was once a small paper-cut factory, with a room displaying paper-cut crafts. The factory has since moved out. Workers are often seen redecorating the yard. Some stone tablets at the entrance bear inscriptions of the Kangxi Emperor.

Continued on page 21...



Jingxian Men, the south gate on Yuxian's old street



Nan'ansi Pagoda still stands among old houses.

Photos by Mockingbird



The old street in Yu County is well paved, attracting daily commerce and bustle.
CFP Photos



Photo by Mockingbird



Nuanquan Town is famous for Dashuhua performance.

Yu County currently has more than 200 ancient fortresses.

...continued from page 20

Yu County also features large sections of preserved city walls, though it may take some time getting out to the edges of town.

It's said that Yu County's walls are replicas of Beijing's old city walls, with more than 24 watchtowers and at least 1,000 crenels.

The city walls broad enough for people to walk on it. Some parts are in good condition, with bricks set in neat rows; other parts aren't as safe, with broken stones and dirt everywhere.

Several trees and other plants grow on the walls. An archway was built in one part of the wall so that residents can walk through town.

Nuanquan Ancient Town

Yu County once was reputed to have 800 fortresses – nearly every village had a fort. More than 200 fortresses have been preserved, scattered throughout the county. One of the most representative fortresses is Xigu Bu in Nuanquan Ancient Town.

Nuanquan, or warm spring, is located in the western part of the county. It was built in Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368) and developed into an important town during the Ming and Qing (1368-1911). Its name derives from a spring that never freezes over during winter.

There are eight ancient forts in Nuanquan Town, with Zhongxiao Bu, Xigu Bu and Beiguan Bu as the oldest.

Xigu Bu, or West Ancient Fort, is the best preserved. It was built during the Ming Dynasty, with a high arch over the gateway, delicate brick carvings, woodcarvings and colorful paintings. Many movies are filmed here.

Another treasure of Nuanquan Town is Dashuhua, which is the process of melting iron to produce sparkles on the city walls. The technique was invented more than 300 years ago, doing for walls what blossoms do for trees. It was traditionally done during

Spring Festival – a nice complement to lanterns – to celebrate the harvest.

These days, Dashuhua is part of a performance given two times a week. Folk singers and dancers will first perform, then craftsmen will splash molten iron on the high walls. The sparkling wall always draws applause.

It's said that only four men have this unique skill, with one young apprentice.

Dashuhua Performance

Where: Shuhua Square, Nuanquan Town, Yu County, Zhangjiakou

When: 8 pm, every Friday and Saturday; daily from October 1-8

Admission: 160 yuan

Tel: 18603131677

Note: A two-hour, open-air performance with folk songs, dances and Dashuhua. One kind of dance, called Nuowu, is distinctly local: a sacred dance that offers sacrifices to expel evil spirits.

Travel information

Getting to Yu County: Take long-distance bus from Liuliqiao Bus Station to Yu County. It takes about three hours. You could also drive along Badaling Expressway in Changping direction, then drive along Beijing-Zhangjiakou Expressway. Turn left at Xuanhua-Datong Expressway and turn left again at 207 National Highway.

Accommodation

Xinyuzhou Hotel:

Where: 77 Heping Lu, Yu County, Zhangjiakou

Tel: 0313-7239 999

Cost: 280 yuan for single room;

332 yuan for standard room

Local dishes:

There are a range of dishes made of *youtian*, a kind of oat that is highly nutritious, including noodles, rolls and dumplings. The area is also famous for dry bean curd and *zhagao*, fried cake made from glutinous broom corn.



A walk in the cloud



Zhai Jijia, a 29-year-old developer at Google China, was one of the first Chinese designers to work on cloud computing content in Zhongguancun.

These days, his friends are asking less about Google's search engine than what cloud computing is and what it can offer.

"Cloud computing basically means that tasks that used to be finished on one computer are now handled collaboratively by a super cluster of computers. Users won't need to download or store software and data on their own computers any more," Zhai said.

"It works something like a bank," he said. "If one person has \$10 at home, there is not a lot he can do with it. But if millions of people all deposit their \$10, then there will be a much larger pool for some of them to borrow from."

In this metaphor, the dollars are software and data and the banks are the cloud.

More technically speaking, cloud computing is the delivery of computing power as a service rather than as

a product. In such a model, shared resources, software and information are provided to computers and other devices over the Internet.

It provides computation power, software, data access and storage without the end user needing to access or know the physical location of these services. The cloud acts as a layer of abstraction between the user and the actual devices and infrastructure.

Many companies are latching onto the cloud as a "low-carbon" way to increase production capacity without investing in infrastructure, training or licensing. Cloud computing as

a concept includes all subscription-based or pay-per-use services that are provided in real time over the Internet, Zhai said.

Operating systems developed around cloud computing techniques are called cloud operating systems: Microsoft's Windows Azure and Google's Chrome OS are a couple examples.

In August, Ma Yun's Alibaba Corporation released the Alibaba Aliyun OS, the first cloud operating systems developed in China.

"Though the market reflection toward cloud computing utilities are weak for consumers who still need a bulk of education for such a new technology, the future of cloud-based apps and user-ends are definitely promising," Zhai said.

Zhai said the most mature cloud operating systems include Apple's iCloud, Microsoft's Windows Azure, Google's Chrome OS and Alibaba's Aliyun OS.

Announced in June at the Apple Worldwide Developers Conference, iCloud is a cloud storage and cloud computing service system. It allows iPhones, iPods, iPads and personal computers running Mac OS X to store music, photos, software and documents on a cloud network.

The system will push them out to the user's other devices at the same time, acting as a data synchronizer for email, contacts, calendars, bookmarks, notes and to-do lists.

"If you upload a picture or document through iCloud, it automatically pushes a copy of it to all your devices," Zhai said.

By Chu Meng

Steve Jobs jumped on Silicon Valley's cloud computing bandwagon with the release of iCloud this June in San Francisco.

But this time, Apple was not the first.

Many of the world's IT juggernauts, such as Google and Microsoft, have been touting their own cloud computing and storage products for quite some time. Even Hewlett-Packard and Haier are jumping in with their own Wi-Fi applications that connect to cloud-based products.

Cloud devices for end users

Cloud e-printer:

Using cloud e-printers, HP moves printing to remote servers so users can print from anywhere in the world without needing to install printer drivers. The utility, a part of Google's Chrome OS, was available in America last June. The service came to China last month.



Alibaba presented China's first cloud-based phone, the K-Touch W700

Google's Chrome OS was designed specifically to support cloud printing, removing the need for a tangible office printer.

The e-printer allows users to print from any portable device to a Web-enabled printer using email. Each printer is given its own email address, so designated users can use their smart phones, tablet computers or laptops to print remotely.

Cloud e-printers have several new features. First, they enable users to store files remotely and print as necessary. Publishers can also customize their print applications to schedule content delivery to printers. Most printing tasks can be customized at the HP e-print website.

But Zhai pointed out that this form of remote printing is not without security concerns, and that the e-printers must be powered around the clock to await orders.

Cloud TV: After Haier, China's top TV manufacturer, announced its cloud-based TV product on August 18, six domestic competitors including Changhong, Skyworth and Hisense announced similar products two weeks later.

Users can customize their program contents using an online programming center and without needing to install or download anything. Cloud TV essentially enables a standard TV set do perform the same tasks as a computer or smart phone.

Zhai said cloud TVs differ from "smart" TVs, as the latter is bundled with a traditional desktop operating system like Microsoft Windows XP.

Cloud phones: In January, Alibaba presented China's first cloud-based phone, the K-Touch W700, based on its Aliyun OS.

The phone will be priced 2,680 yuan and available in 10 colors. It is hoped to help Alibaba tap into the fast-growing mobile Internet market.

The new phone's user-friendly platform comes with various cloud-based services pre-installed. These let users run applications on their device without having to download and install them. Alibaba also unveiled the Cloud App store, an accessory service to supply software to its cloud phones and tablets.



HP cloud e-printer allows users to print from any portable device to a Web-enabled printer via email.



Steven Jobs released iClouds this June in San Francisco.

CFP Photo

Dining



Luxurious cafe latte

Lobby Lounge is celebrating the return of autumn with its best cafe lattes, including the Liegeois Latte, Tia Maria and Maple Latte, Vanilla and Caramel Latte and Orange Essence Latte. Savor these warm drinks in the lounge's beautiful imperial-inspired interior with live classical music accompaniment.

Where: Lobby Lounge, China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District
When: October 1-31
Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 37

Seasonal forest mushrooms

One East is preparing a menu of delicacies made from freshly-picked forest mushrooms guaranteed to leave a primal imprint on your tongue. The four-course dinner set, available through October, features creative mushroom cuisines prepared by executive chef Jeffery Siew.

The set includes an original appetizer of baked portobello mushroom salad, a choice of porcini-ricotta cheese ravioli or fried abalone mushroom-apple chicken roulade as a main course, and roast chicken-leg mushroom cheese tower dessert. Each dish is guaranteed to drive your senses wild.

Come and indulge with your family and friends at One East!

Where: One East, Hilton Hotel Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until October 31

Cost: Dinner set menu 428 yuan per person; 499 yuan per person with a glass of New Zealand Marlborough, Drylands Pinot Noir (15 percent gratuity)

Tel: 5865 5030



Lots of lobster

Grange is serving the freshest lobster with some of Australia's finest wines. Reserve an unforgettable lunch or dinner this autumn.

Where: Grange Grill, The Westin Beijing Chaoyang, 7 Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until October 16, Monday to Friday, 11:30 am - 2:30 pm, 5:30-10:30 pm
Tel: 5922 8880



Chill out at Summer Lounge

Still looking for somewhere to soak in the summer rays, sip champagne and puff on an apple-flavored hookah? Head to the Summer Lounge at Shangri-La's Kerry Center Hotel, Beijing. Its outdoor location on the hotel's fourth-floor rooftop garden is open exclusively during the summer months.

With 90 seats scattered across the garden terrace, guests can enjoy charming and awe-inspiring views of the city and of China World Summit Wing, the city's tallest building. The location is a perfect getaway from the everyday hustle and bustle and for less formal business meetings. Guests can enjoy fresh coffee and sandwiches while working or chatting with friends. At dusk, indulge in fine wine, colorful cocktails and barbecued seafood and meat delights.

A variety of hookah flavorings are available.

Where: Summer Lounge, Shangri-La's Kerry Center Hotel, 1 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Daily, 7 am - 11 pm
Tel: 8565 2398



Airline



British Airways unveils 'early bird' specials

British Airways today announced round-trip fares to the UK and other European destinations as low as 3,800 yuan for travelers planning trips before March 2012.

Through October 18, customers flying from Beijing or Shanghai can receive a discounted rate on flights departing between October 11 and March 31. Return tickets in economy class start from 3,800 yuan to one of seven UK destinations. Customers can then travel to any of 16 European destinations for the same price.

The same "early bird" special in the more comfortable and roomy World Traveler Plus premium economy cabin starts from 9,800 yuan.

"Whether you're planning to visit family or friends, shop or soak in the Christmas spirit, this is the perfect opportunity to lock in the lowest fares," said Kevin McQuillan, British Airways' regional general manager, East Asia.

Book early at ba.com to secure this great deal. Seats are limited and booking ends at midnight on October 18.

Hotel

Marriott embarks on 2nd project in Sichuan

Marriott International recently announced that Nobility of Nature, its ambitious freshwater conservation program, will expand to support Yingying County in Sichuan to support sustainable economic activities that contribute to conserving local freshwater resources.

Yingying County has a population of 150,000 people and is 175 kilometers southwest of Chengdu. Agriculture is its primary economic activity.

The Yingying River is a key tributary of the Qingyi River, which feeds into the Yangtze River. The Yangtze provides water to almost one third of China's people and is fed by the Asia Water Tower, a source of fresh water for more than two billion people.

Announced in 2010, "Nobility of Nature" is a collaboration between Marriott International and Conservation International to support freshwater conservation and assist rural communities with sustainable businesses that reduce stress on the environment, most especially its sources of freshwater.

A cooperation signing ceremony was held in Yingying on September 9 and was attended by local government officials and representatives of Marriott International and Conservation International, as well as some 100 local villagers and school kids.

(By Jackie Zhang)



Fri, Sept 23

Movie To Our Loves (1983)

Suzanne, a 15-year-old Parisian, lives with her mother and brother when her father leaves the family for another woman. To escape her neurotic mother and violent brother, she seeks her true self while shuttling from one guy to another.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 7 pm
Admission: 15 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 8459 9269

Nightlife 48V

Founded in 2005 in Changsha, Hunan Province, the rock band 48V released its second album, *The South II*, earlier this year, blending electronic music with traditional instruments.

Where: MAO Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: 8:30 pm
Admission: 50 yuan advance purchase, 60 yuan at the door
Tel: 6402 5080

Sat, Sept 24



Movie

Last Train Home (2010)

This documentary is about a migrant worker's family as it navigates the difficult balance between earning a living and maintaining the parent-child relationship. The film follows the family for three years, focusing on their train journeys during Spring Festival.

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, north section of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 4 pm
Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008

Nightlife

Wu Tun

If the band Tongue is "a sharp ax," as it's often called, then lead vocalist Wu Tun is its handle. Now also filling the role of guitarist, Wu reveals his understanding of society in his poetic lyrics.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm
Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 6401 4611

Nightlife

Let's Gap Year Together!

The post-punk band Subs and pop-rock band Perdel Band will perform together at this rock party.

Where: Mako Livehouse, 36 Guangqu Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 8 pm
Admission: 40 yuan advance purchase, 60 yuan at the door
Tel: 5205 1112



Nightlife Jurat T. T.

From Karamay, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Jurat T. T. is the lead vocalist and guitarist of the rock band Jurat, crafting and refining his style of rock within Xinjiang's ethnic folk music.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: 9 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 6401 4611

Sun, Sept 25



Nightlife

Rebel Soul Collective

This British band plays dance and indie rock, evolving out of 1990s chemical rave. The band combines dance-floor electronic noises with vocals, guitar and drums.

Where: Mako Livehouse, 36 Guangqu Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 8:30 pm
Admission: 60 yuan advance purchase, 80 yuan at the door
Tel: 5205 1112

Tue, Sept 27



Exhibition

125 Years of Italian Magnificence

This exhibition provides a comprehensive view of European jewelry design, viewed through the creations of Bulgari, a leading jeweler. For 125 years, Bulgari has constantly provided extraordinary creations, cooperating with designers and technologists in order to create a masterpiece of splendid Italian classical history. Beijing is the third destination for the exhibition, after Rome and Paris.

Where: National Museum of China, 16 Dong Chang'an Jie, Dongcheng District

When: Until November 3, 9 am - 6 pm
Admission: 10 yuan
Tel: 6511 6400



Mon, Sept 26

Exhibition

Rumor - Wu Junyong Solo Exhibition

Wu Junyong has worked on his "A Dictionary of Slang" project since 2008. Using Chinese slang and idioms gathered from daily life, he translates their literal meanings into images, revealing their dark humor.

Where: F2 Gallery, 319 Caochangdi Village, Chaoyang District

When: Until November 7, daily except Monday and Tuesday, 10 am - 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6432 8831

Wed, Sept 28

Thu, Sept 29

Movie

I Am Love (2009)

This Italian film tells the story of the wealthy Recchi family, whose lives are undergoing sweeping changes. Eduardo, the family patriarch, has decided to name a successor for his massive industrial company, and in doing so, surprises everyone by splitting power between his son and grandson.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 8229 6153

(By He Jianwei)

